YOUTHS UNITE!

by

Jawaharlal Nehru

A "HAMARA HINDOSTAN" PUBLICATION

As. 4.

C. Srinivasan

YOUTHS UNITE!

NO. 1

★

Long live Saradha-Srinivasan.

An. Kailas.

14. 11. 43.

YOUTHS UNITE!

by

Jawaharlal Nehru

GENERAL EDITOR:

J. P. GUPTA

ADVISORY EDITOR

SOM BENEGAL

"HAMARA HINDOSTAN" PUBLICATIONS

BOMBAY

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Youth, it is often said is the architect of a Nation's Freedom. The magnificient edifice of freedon is yet to be built in India.

In every country youth is considered as the backbone of a nation. Youth movements have revolutionised thoughts and ideals in other countries and swept away reactionary forces that stood in the way of their national regeneration.

Our energies must be applied to the solution of our basic national defects which are a stumbling block to the attainment of our National freedom.

"Unite forty crores of Indians by one common national ideal and inspire them with the firm conviction that only National Unity can and will herald the dawn of Indian Liberty."

With this object in view, we have undertaken to publish a series of booklets under the heading "Youths Unite !"

This is an address by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru at the All India Students Federation in 1938.

October 1942.

Printed by R. P. Shukla at the Vidyalaya Press, 23, Hamam Street, and published by Mannalal Gupta for the "Hamara Hindostan" Publications, 23, Hamam Street, Fort, Bombay.

"Hindostan Hamara"

Sare jahan se achha Hindostan Hamara,
Hum bulbulen hain iski yeh gulistan Hamara,

Parbat woh sab se uncha hamsaya asman ka,
Woh santari Hamara, woh pasban hamara,

Godi men khelti hain iski hazaron nadiyan,
Gulshan hai jiske dam se, rashke jahan hamara,

Mazhab nahin sikhata apas men bair rakhana,
Hindi hain ham watan hai Hindostan Hamara.

And in case you have yet to master the nationa language here is the English translation:-

The finest country in the world is our India,
We are its nightingales, it is our rose-garden:

The highest mountain-range, the neighbour of the sky.
Is our sentry and our protector:

In its laps play thousands of rivers.
Which make of it a garden that is the envy of the world.

Religion does not teach us to bear enmity towards one another.
We are Indians and our country is India.

—*Iqbal.*



Friends,

Youths Unite

Too Many Problems

I am wondering on what particular subject I am to address you, not for any lack of ideas but rather for too many ideas in my head, for too many subjects on which I could have addressed you. Because it is the student world or the somewhat larger youth's world of India or the world or national problems or international problems whichever side you look to, there is an abundance of questions which demand an answer and it is for us to find out what those answers are. Probably we will not find out what those answers are. But in our attempt to find out an answer thefirst thing that is necessary is to understand and define the problem itself. Now, it is an extraordinary thing that many of us imagine that we know the answers to many of the questions and yet if an attempt is made to find what the question was to which that answer has been found, you will find that the question itself has not been framed even. We come to the answer before we come to the question itself. On the face of it, it is an absurd thing.

In other words, we arrive at some sentimental conclusion because it seems to appeal to us without our really realising what the problem was and without knowing what the answer should be. To some extent it is natural because the average human being is not a very logical, rational, reasoning and thinking individual. He or she acts on certain urges and then, later on perhaps, tries to justify those urges by some line of logic or reasoning. But that is not good enough at any time and not certainly good enough for those who call themselves students and who are at a stage of life more than others when they should be formulating questions, considering them and trying to seek answers to them. *Because on the one hand you have outgrown the stage of childhood and have stepped into youth when you do not think quite logically;* on the other hand you have not yet reached the stage of manhood in the sense that you have merged yourself into some activities. And because you have not merged yourselves into activities, you have time to think and consider. *Therefore, you, who are on the threshold of life, are also in a sense on the threshold of thought. And if you do not take advantage of that positition*

of yours on the threshold, then you will pass further on to the house of life itself and perhaps you will find that you have lost the opportunity of thinking an l solving many problems. Although, in a sense of course, you are true to life, you should always retain the outlook of a student. Obviously you cannot learn much in your schools and colleges. If you want to learn much you have to go on learning for many years after you have left your schools and colleges. Schools and colleges only give a certain background, a certain training of the mind, a certain habit of learning at the most. It is afterwards when you go to utilise that habit and training that you acquire knowledge and so take an effective part in the world affairs.

Self-Educaion

If I may speak personally, I suppose I was an average student at school and college, may be, from the point of view of study, just a little above the average. But whatever I learnt at school and college was very little so far I remember. Most of my learning came after that. *Self-learning, self-education came by afterwards by hard work, not casually. If you imagine you can achieve anything, you can do anything without hard work,*

you are mistaken. So that most of what I learnt I have learnt since I have left college and that was learning by hard work. Fortunately, I had the occasion to find myself at work. I had the opportunity which everybody does not have. And that is long quiet years of study in prison. Not only that. Even outside that although I live a fairly busy life, may I tell you that I always try to find some time at least to keep in touch with ideas, with books and literatures. Because I do not want to fall back, I want to keep pace with the world. I want to be mentally equipped to be able to understand and I want to have the capacity to study the world problems. *So I have retained this habit of a student in some measure even to-day.* I have said that I did not learn much at school or college. And yet I learnt a great deal in the sense that I got a kind of training, that I got the habit of educating myself. These are the general remarks I place before you and I do so purposely.

A Narrow Approach

While I lay stress on the general approach to these questions and other questions, what I feel is that I find that your approach is *often a narrow approach to a particular problem.* And that

narrow approach may be good enough while you are dealing with a problem it may help you in passing a resolution and creating enthusiasm for particular purpose. But unless you have a wider approach you cannot deal with an individual problem correctly.

British Imperialism

British Imperialism is still one of the biggest and the most powerful imperialism in the world. Never the less from the long point of view of history, it is dead. Historically speaking, it has given up the ghost. Though in actuality it may survive a number of years,-ten years, twelve years, fifteen years, I do not know. But the point is that historically speaking it is a dying thing. It may carry on yet because of some impetus it has got but it has lost the spirt to survive, it has lost the material resources that gave it strength, and what is more, it has lost the spirit and the heart to survive. I have not a shadow of doubt that British Imperialism cannot keep us down or prevent us from achieving independence to-day. To-day we are strong enough to face it.

Not To Be Sectarian

I think you must come to this clear decision

that the student movement must be broadbased and must on no account be sectarian. We have in India various ideologies, various lines of thought, idelogical and mental conflicts and it is right some of these conflicts will be reflected in the students' movement. I should not discourage you if among students there were separate organisation even for the study of a certain ideology. You can study, you can formulate your schemes. you can discuss among yourselves, you may have any kind of ideological group for that purpose. But when you are trying to build up a students' front, a students' federation you cannot afford to make it narrow, and shut out persons holding differing views. That will be utterly wrong. If you do that, all your attention will be diverted to mutual controversies, leading to weakness, bitterness and disintegration.

Go Down Deeper

You know well enough that in India we have a number of disrupting and disintegrating forces in our body-politic, in our public life and it is up to all of us, more especially to young men and young women, to fight those disrupting factors and disintegrating tendencies. If you allow those disintegrating tendencies to develop in your own

movement, you will be putting forward an example of disruption and disintegration. That is not good enough. We have extraordinary problems in India, indeed all over the world.

You pass resolutions, anti-fascist and anti-imperialist resolutions, resolutions for Peace, Freedom and so forth. I am not quite sure how many of you realise the background of these resolutions and how many of you pass them because they sound nice or there might be a vague mental understanding of them. But how many of you have in your minds a clear analysis of the back ground of these resolutions ? I doubt many of you have not. If you have not got that clear analysis, it is nothing to be ashamed of although it has to be avoided, because the world is frightfully complicated to-day. If you think that by merely passing resolutions you will be doing away with the sorry scheme of things, you will be doing injustice to yourselves and to these problems. It is right that you should pass various resolutions because the passing of those, leads you to think, and once *the process of thought begins in your mind, it produces an enormous reaction in your mind, and your life and activities.* What I want you to appreciate is that many of us come to conclusions very

rapidly without taking the trouble to understand any problem in its entirety or in its depth. We should try to go down deeper.

I wish to express my utter distress at the methods the communal leaders are introducing to our public life which inevitably are resulting in the deterioration of the whole tone of the public life. There are certain standards that we have to follow in public life. And if we leave those standards we do so at our peril. Let us admit that the Congress is helplessly wrong or for the matter of that any other organisation is wrong. But right or wrong if we are to continue our public life with any measure of sobriety and responsibility we have to observe certain standards of decency, and I regret to say that progressively those standards are disappearing from our communal organisations. I have no doubt that time will come when this bitterness will pass away and the large number of people who are very decent people but who on account of passions, prejudices, and other things are in the communal organisations today, will realise where they are going to and will gradually come round.

I cannot think of anything more absurd than to talk of a Hindu Students' Federation or

a Muslim Students' Federation just as it is equally absurd to have a Muslim workers' Union and Hindu workers' Union in a factory. That is absurd.

Disrupting Tendency

The communal problem has a strangely disrupting tendency and the way this is developing, is creating more and more. disintegration in the national ranks. The fact that it has not succeeded in weakening the national movement in the larger sense is certain. But nevertheless the fact remains that the development of this communal tendency in the way it has developed, is something to be greatly deplored.

The resolutions adopted by the Congress in the earlier years of its development were more strongly worded than those which are now being passed by the Congress. This is but natural and is the result of the strength that the Congress has gained. In earlier years the resolutions were "agitational resolutions" but now–a–days the resolutions are mild and simple, but nonetheless more dignified and they carry behind them the threat of action. Previously the resolutions were more or less 'shouting' resolutions

but to-day the resolutions are 'responsible' resolutions quite conscious that they might have effect on large sections of people, because the Congress has attained this position to-day, that, if they pass a resolution, people would act according to it. And the outside world also knows that when the Congress passes a resolution, it has behind it the threat of action. It behoves you therefore to consider all the implications of a problem before passing a resolution on it.

I want you to understand my line of argument, because I want you to apply it to your activities, to your own organisation. Because most people do not appreciate the change that comes over a growing nation when it attains power and responsibility or is on the verge of power and responsibility.

If you and I go to foreign countries to-day, we have to behave in a very different way from, say, the manner of behaviour even a dozen years ago. I personally behave in a different way now if I speak in a foreign country. Twenty years ago as far as I can remember, I was full of grievances, full of certain bitterness, full of complaints. On the whole, my efforts at speaking were more in

the nature of whining than anything else. It created a certain sympathy among those who heard me. Sympathy like this: that, here is a man who comes from a place, who has suffered a lot, so let us sympathise with him. But apart from the momentary sympathy, people passed on to their other problems.

Strength And Dignity

If I speak now in a foreign country, there is an enormous difference. I do not even choose to complain to anybody or to whine, or to go on begging for sympathy. Now I speak with certain strength behind me. I tell them, of course, that we have our struggle for freedom, and that we are intending to achieve our freedom and we welcome a co-operation with the progressive forces of the world for that. But generally speaking, my approach now is one of self.reliance and strength. Then I go on to the problems of the world and talk of co-operation of the Indian people to their problems. In spite of being beggars and takers, I take up the position of a giver, thereby producing a psychological reaction on other people's mind about my new strength which did not come from my whining. *They now realise that they are talking*

to a people who must be treated as equals with any independent people.

So, I want you to develop that manner of speaking, that manner of thinking, that manner of acting. It will give you strength, dignity and the action that follows that thought, that expression of thought, will take you farther than you could go otherwise.

Take the case of the Congress. A great change came over the Congress when we shifted from the plane of resolution and talk, to the plane of action.

Situation in Europe

I doubt if the full significance of the things that had happened in Europe during the last few years have been properly understood in this country. During these few years in Europe many very strange events have happened, events whichare more important from the historically point of view than the Great War of 1914 to 1918, something bigger than the Great War, not from the point of view of casualties, destruction of lives, but from the point of view of changes that they have brought about in Europe. These events have

entirely changed the map of Europe, and it is continually changing. And what is more, I find an extreme 'paralysis of the intellect' in countries like England and France which presume to call themselves, still democratic,—an extreme paralysis of intellect among people, young and old, people belonging to all manner of highly advanced groups as well as less advanced groups as well as conservatives. There is a strange paralysis of intellect among these people. People appear to be overwhelmed with too many problems and they do not appear to find a solution for them.

If you have to find a solution for a human problem, that solution is not something between the problem and you. That solution involves a large number of millions of other human beings. You may sit down and think that this is a perfect and proper solution for a particular problem but the point is, do the other millions think so ? Are they going to function that way ? If they are not, then it does not count, because we have to propose something which will not only solve the problems of the world but which other people will also appreciate and try to act according to your solution. When you evolve schemes that have no

connection with reality, they completely fail because they have no connection with reality.

So, the first question for us is to understand a particular problem and secondly if we have understood it in its entirety, that in itself brings half the solution. And then you proceed to the solution for it.

Indian Independence

We talk vaguely about the problems. There is one problem of *Indian freedom, Indian independence*. Then, there is a problem of Indian poverty. Then, there is also the problem of unemployment. Then there are innumerable other problems. There are problems which we have in common with the rest of the world. There is the problem of democracy.

What is democracy? Is it, as the Congress says, that we want an independent democratic State in India? What exactly do you mean by it? So far when people have talked about democracy, they have thought in terms of what is called nineteenth century Parliamentary Democracy which in a greater or less measure is supposed to exist in England, France and U.S.A., barring some smaller countries. Is that what we mean? Now we have

seen that *that type of democracy does not exist*, that it has been thrown overbcard in other countries like Germany and Italy. We have seen it in another country like Russia an entirely different form of Government. You pass resolutions condemning this and that. But do you try to think what exactly you want? Many of you perhaps feel attracted towards what is happening in Russia with the economic theory behind it. Perhaps all of you are violently antagonistic to what is happening in Germany and Italy. So far so good. *But these are more or less negative reactions*.

Change Mnst Come

What I am aiming at is this, that, as a matter of fact, we find in England or France the so-called nineteenth century democracy is very different today from what it used to be. It is not the nineteenth century democracy. It is a changing thing. Most people in England have come to the conclusion that they cannot continue in the way they have continued in the past, that some change must come. Therefore this problem has to be understood and faced by you.

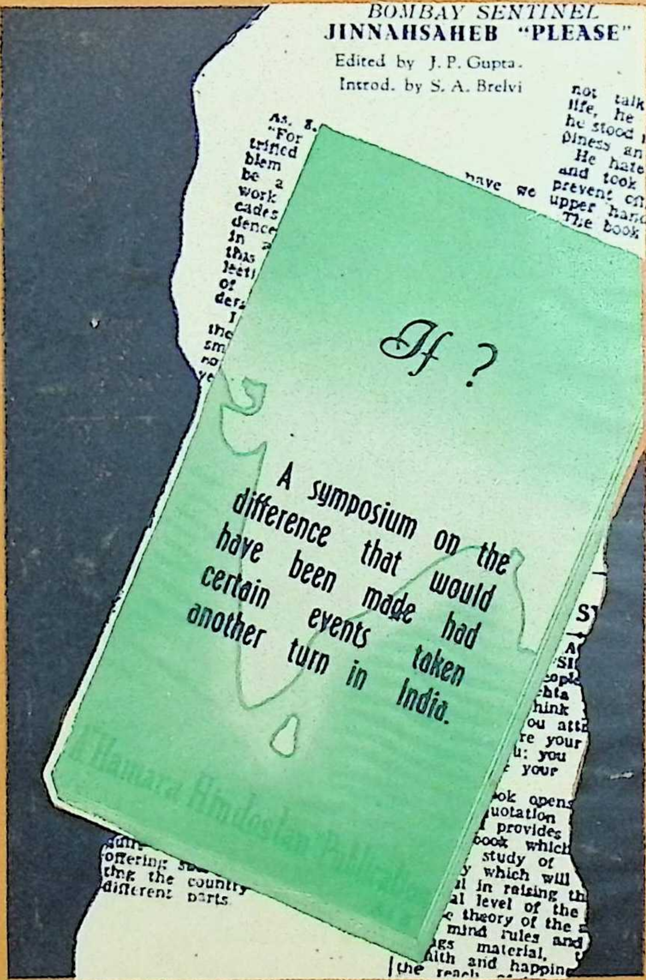
Then again, if you apply the democratic

ideal to India, how do you do it ? What is the background in India. We must admit that for a large number of years we have had no democratic background in India. Democracy in particular is a thing which requires a certain tradition behind it, a certain habit, *a certain discipline.* A democracy without discipline goes to pieces. Too much democracy also,—so-called democracy, without disciplince, leads to *disruption.* It is pure *license.* Then what is the balance ? That is the problem that faces you. It faces you not only in India but all over the world. It faces you, the students organisation, and the Congress. If democracy and discipline go together, how can we go on ? Without a certain measure of discipline, democracy cannot go on. We want freedom and democracy in the whole world.

There has been a lot of talk about collective security. There is no collective security in the world now. That collective security in a broad sense must bring together discipline and democracy in an international sense. Nationally speak ing, you have the same problem of bringing together discipline and democracy. How it has to be done is a difficult matter.

Democracy in the ninteenth century was on the political plane and it succeeded in a limited sense. But now in the twentieth century it is not succeeding. Because somehow the political plane is not enough. Unless democracy is extended to the economic plane, it ceases to function as democracy. And unless they can make democracy go ahead, that democracy will have to go back. For India that is a still more difficult problem.

The world is in quite an extraordinary state to-day. It is a very exciting state, and sometimes I feel a little jealous of people like you who are much younger and who will see so many things in this world happening before your eyes, so many things in which you will have to take part. But apart from that, I want you to realise the tremendous responsibility that is cast on all of us, more especially, on you students, because after all **YOU** will have to shoulder the burden of provincial, national and international activities. You young men and young women, have to shoulder it and you have got to be ready for it because unless you are ready for it, it will be a misfortune for our country.



A

"HAMARA HINDOSTAN" SPECIAL

to be out

next Month